

In the Claims:

Cancel claims 1-6, 17, 18 and 20 without estoppel or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and amend claims 19, 29 and 31 as follows:

1.-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Previously Presented) A method for selectively displacing a vessel structure using an elongated cannula including a retractor disposed at the distal end of the cannula for engaging the vessel structure, the method comprising the steps for:

advancing the distal end of the cannula to a location adjacent a vessel structure;

engaging the vessel structure with the retractor; and

positioning the distal end of the cannula near the vessel structure;

selectively deflecting the retractor to engage and displace the vessel structure laterally away from axial alignment with the elongated cannula;

providing a surgical tool disposed near the distal end of the cannula; and

engaging a branch vessel of the vessel structure with the surgical tool to sever the branch vessel from the vessel structure.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7 in which the retractor includes an angling device attached to the retractor and extending in the cannula between distal and proximal ends thereof, the method further comprising the step for:

selectively manipulating the angling device near the proximal end of the cannula to deflect the retractor and displace the vessel structure engaged therewith at the distal end of the cannula.

9. (Original) The method according to claim 8 in which the angling device includes a tension member attached to the retractor and to a handle near the proximal end of the cannula, the method further comprising the step for:

manually manipulating the handle to exert deflecting force on the retractor through the tension member.

10. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7 further including a sliding tube extending in the cannula and being movable over the retractor between a first position wherein the retractor protrudes from a distal end of the sliding tube and deflects at an angle with respect to the central axis of the cannula, and a second position wherein the sliding tube substantially encases the retractor and straightens it, the method further comprising the step for:

selectively manipulating the sliding tube to deflect the retractor and displace the vessel structure engaged therewith at the distal end of the cannula.

11. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 10 in which a button is provided near the proximal end of the cannula for manipulating the sliding tube, the method further comprising the step for:

manually manipulating the button to displace the sliding tube from the first position to the second position, thus displacing the vessel structure.

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7 wherein the retractor includes two legs projecting from the cannula and connected at a distal cradle for engaging the vessel structure, and wherein one of the retractor legs is rotationally connected to a sliding knob at a proximal end of the cannula, the method further comprising the step for:

manually manipulating the sliding knob to rotationally displace the one leg and twist the cradle, thus displacing the vessel structure.

13. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 7 wherein the surgical tool is supported in a lumen of the cannula and extends beyond the distal end thereof for simultaneous operation with the retractor, further comprising the steps for:

linearly displacing the surgical tool with respect to the retractor.

14.-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Currently Amended) ~~The A surgical apparatus of claim 18 in which,~~
comprising:

an elongated cannula having a lumen extending therein between proximal and distal ends;

a vessel retractor disposed to slide within the lumen to extend a distal end thereof beyond the distal end of the cannula, the retractor having a vessel cradle on a distal end thereof generally having walls defining a space for receiving and capturing a vessel;

an angling device attached near the distal end of the retractor and extending within the cannula toward the proximal end thereof for selectively deflecting the distal end of the retractor during extension thereof away from a central axis of the cannula in response to manipulation of the angling device near the proximal end of the cannula, the cradle being oriented on the retractor with the space opening away from the central axis to receive and capture a vessel therein and displace it away from the central axis;

a surgical tool supported in a lumen of the cannula extendable beyond the distal end thereof for simultaneous operation with the retractor for performing a surgical procedure on a portion of a vessel engaged by the retractor, the retractor and the surgical tool ~~[are]~~ being relatively movable near the distal end of the cannula to facilitate severing a portion of ~~[the]~~ a vessel engaged by the retractor.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Previously Presented) A surgical apparatus comprising:

an elongated cannula having a lumen extending therein between proximal and distal ends;

a retractor disposed to slide within the lumen to extend a distal end thereof beyond the distal end of the cannula;

a sliding tube extending in the cannula and being movable over the retractor between a first position wherein the retractor protrudes from a distal end of the sliding tube and deflects at an angle with respect to the central axis of the cannula, and a second position wherein the sliding tube substantially encases the retractor and straightens it, the sliding tube being the movable between the second position and the first position for selectively deflecting the distal end of the retractor during extension thereof away from a central axis of the cannula.

22. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 21 further including a button provided near the proximal end of the cannula for manipulating the sliding tube from the first position to the second position.

23. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 22 further including a spring biasing the sliding tube into the first position.

24. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 21 further including a surgical tool supported in a lumen of the cannula and extending beyond the distal end thereof for simultaneous operation with the retractor for performing a surgical procedure on the vessel engaged by the retractor.

25. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 24 in which the retractor and the surgical tool are relatively movable near the distal end of the cannula to facilitate severing a portion of the vessel engaged by the retractor.

26. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 21 in which the vessel retractor has a vessel cradle on a distal end thereof having walls oriented to define a space that opens away from the central axis to receive and capture a vessel and displace it away from the central axis when the distal end of the retractor is selectively deflected.

27. (Previously Presented) A surgical apparatus comprising:

an elongated cannula having a lumen extending therein between proximal and distal ends;

a retractor disposed to slide within the lumen to extend a distal end thereof beyond the distal end of the cannula;

an angling device attached near the distal end of the retractor and extending within the cannula toward the proximal end thereof for selectively deflecting the distal end of the retractor during extension thereof away from a central axis of the cannula in response to manipulation of the angling device near the proximal end of the cannula; and

a surgical tool supported in a lumen of the cannula and extending beyond the distal end thereof for simultaneous operation with the retractor for performing a surgical procedure on the vessel engaged by the retractor,

wherein the retractor and the surgical tool are relatively movable near the distal end of the cannula to facilitate severing a portion of the vessel engaged by the retractor.

28. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus according to claim 27 in which at least the distal portion includes a resiliently flexible support that is slidably disposed within the lumen and that includes a cradle attached at a distal end thereof.

29. (Currently Amended) The surgical apparatus according to claim 28 in which the cradle is disposed to engage a vessel structure for selectively displacing the vessel structure in response to tensile force exerted on the retractor through [[the]] a tension member attached thereto.

30. (Previously Presented) The surgical apparatus of claim 27 in which the vessel retractor has a vessel cradle on a distal end thereof having walls oriented to define a space that opens away from the central axis to receive and capture a vessel and displace it away from the central axis when the distal end of the retractor is selectively deflected.

31. (Currently Amended) A method of selectively displacing a vessel structure using an elongated cannula including a retractor disposed at [[the]] a distal end of

the cannula for engaging the vessel structure, a sliding tube extending in the cannula and being movable over the retractor between a first position wherein the retractor protrudes from a distal end of the sliding tube and deflects at an angle with respect to ~~[[the]]~~ a central axis of the cannula, and a second position wherein the sliding tube substantially encases the retractor and straightens it, the method comprising the steps for:

advancing the distal end of the cannula to a location adjacent a vessel structure;

engaging the vessel structure with the retractor; and

selectively manipulating the sliding tube to deflect the retractor and displace the vessel structure engaged therewith at the distal end of the cannula.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31 in which a button is provided near the proximal end of the cannula for manipulating the sliding tube, the method further comprising the step for:

manually manipulating the button to displace the sliding tube from the first position to the second position, thus displacing the vessel structure.

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 31 in which the retractor includes an angling device attached to the retractor and extending in the cannula between distal and proximal ends thereof, the method further comprising the step for:

selectively manipulating the angling device near the proximal end of the cannula to deflect the retractor and displace the vessel structure engaged therewith at the distal end of the cannula.

34. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 33 in which the angling device includes a tension member attached to the retractor and to a handle near the proximal end of the cannula, the method further comprising the step for:

manually manipulating the handle to exert deflecting force on the retractor through the tension member.